

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-10. (cancelled)

11. (currently amended) Rescue vessel for vessels, comprising:

an elongated basin (12, 26) at least [[150]] 250 m in length and [[30]] 45 m in width which can be closed to limit to said basin pollution by a vessel in distress protected in the basin,

a ballast device that makes it possible to alter the vessel's draft by at least [[15]] 20 m,

a hull that comprises two lateral hulls that surround said basin (12, 26) and that delimits at least one upper edge of said basin (12, 26), the ballast device operating between at least two positions in one of which positions the basin (12, 26) is evacuated and at least the upper edge is found above sea level, and in the other of which positions the basin (12, 26) is full with an end of the basin found below a level of a keel of a vessel in distress, and

maneuvering means configured to exert a thrust in a direction that is transverse to at least a longitudinal axis of the vessel, wherein,

the stern comprises a sealed door (18) with a height of at least 40m and configured to close and seal the rear of basin on an edge that is found below the level of the keel of the vessel in distress, the stern of the hull being sealed thereby protecting the vessel in distress in the basin and limiting possible pollution from the vessel in distress to the basin.

12-16. (cancelled)

17. (previously presented) Rescue vessel according to claim 11, wherein the two port and starboard longitudinal sides (28) of the hull both have a height that is lower by at least 20 m than that of the other two delimited sides at the front and at the rear of the vessel, and their upper edge (32) is virtually rectilinear on the largest part of its length and is provided with a reinforcement.

18. (cancelled)

19. (currently amended) Process for rescuing vessels in distress with the assistance of a rescue vessel (10, 24) that can

be ballasted and that has a basin (12, 26) according to claim 11, wherein it comprises:

a first phase of movement of a rescue vessel (10, 24) toward the location of the vessel in distress,

a second phase, executed close to the vessel in distress, of ballasting the rescue vessel (10, 24) such that at least one upper edge of a basin (12, 26) is found below the level of the keel of the vessel in distress, and

a third phase for introducing the vessel in distress into basin (12, 26) by maneuvering to exert a thrust in a direction that is transverse to at least the longitudinal axis of the vessel, to orient the vessel such that its rear part that is opened wide is rotated toward the vessel in distress, and protecting the vessel in distress in the basin and closing the door to seal the rear of the basin limiting possible pollution from the vessel in distress to the basin, and

a fourth phase of putting the upper edge of basin (12, 26) above sea level.

20. (previously presented) Application of a rescue vessel (10, 24) according to claim 11 to the transport of bulky structures that are selected from among the vessels and parts of vessels, the drilling or production platforms, and the parts of such platforms, and the marine farming modules at sea, including a phase, executed close to said bulky structures, of ballasting

said rescue vessel (10, 24) such that at least one upper edge of basin (12, 26) is found below the level of the lowest part of said bulky structure.

21. (cancelled)

22. (previously presented) Rescue vessel according to claim 11, wherein at least one rear door has a height on the order of 78 m.